

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

The state of our state

How is Oregon doing as a state?

Gov. Kate Brown answered that question only in the broadest sense during her State of the State speech this week: "Oregon's rising economic tide should be lifting all boats. Yet many hardworking families are still under water."

Her answer is a plan she dubbed "Future Ready Oregon," including:

- Focus the state's economic development efforts on people of color and rural Oregonians.
- Address Oregon's housing shortage for working families.
- Make it easier for construction workers to start their own business, especially if they will build low-income housing in rural areas.
- Invest more in career-technical education and hands-on learning.
- Expand apprenticeships in good-paying jobs that need workers — information technology, health care, advanced wood manufacturing and high-tech manufacturing.
- Make it easier for individuals to enter the health care field, enabling them to train for various health-care sectors at once.

These goals are worthwhile, and align

with Eastern Oregon's interests and needs. Anyone making these statements at the opening of a legislative session should be applauded.

Rural Oregonians and people of color were left behind amid the economic boom experienced in Portland and other metro areas. Meanwhile, much of Oregon suffers from a shortage of housing for low- and middle-income residents. And certainly, Oregon's education and training systems should better align with projected job opportunities. As Brown said, "The goal is to close the gap between the workforce that we have and the workforce that we need to fuel Oregon's economy."

She went on to say, "Over the course of the next year, through a series of executive actions, policy positions and legislation, Future Ready Oregon will build these pathways for adults to get the right skills for the right jobs of Oregon's future."

Brown spoke in broad terms that left many people in the Oregon Capitol, including some of her fellow Democrats, wondering what she had in mind. And despite Brown's calling her plan "a new way of thinking about the economy," previous governors,



Molly J. Smith/Statesman-Journal via AP
Gov. Kate Brown, center, greets members of the Oregon Senate as she arrives for the State of the State address Monday at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem.

education officials and business leaders have said similar things.

That's where Brown must distinguish herself, and show rather than tell. It's an election year and she would like to keep her job come November. Serving the greater good of all Oregonians won't be of much interest to her urban Democratic base, but will define her credibility with the rest of us.

In Umatilla and Morrow counties, we feel deeply the need for housing and workers in both the construction trades and health care. A defined and executed plan to improve both would be a welcome change.

This was not a bold speech. But it was a pragmatic speech. Oregon — both rural and urban — will benefit if Brown can make these ideas stick.

OTHER VIEWS

Gulp. I'm guilty of treason.

After more than five decades of reasonably virtuous living, I'm now told that I have betrayed my country and committed the ultimate crime.

I did not clap during President Donald Trump's State of the Union address.

Granted, my hands were otherwise engaged. They pounded my laptop's keyboard as I frantically took notes: "clean coal," "disastrous Obamacare." And I'm limited in my appendages and much too clumsy to approximate applause with my feet.

But even if could, I wouldn't have. That's not because I'm rooting against America. It's because I'm rooting for it — and believe that we deserve better than a leader who uses language as sloppily and poisonously as Trump does, who reacts to every unwelcome message by smearing the messenger, and whose litmus test for patriotism is this and this alone: Do you worship me?

On Monday afternoon he visited a manufacturing plant outside Cincinnati, where of course he complimented himself, lavishly. He complained as he often does about the insufficient credit that he gets. He mused with audacious selectiveness about all the blessings he was bringing to us. No plummet of the Dow punctures his self-regard.

But something that he said stood out, not just because it went so ludicrously far, even by Trumpian standards, but because it so perfectly captured his distinctive madness and meanness. Recalling that many Democrats sat on their hands for much or all of his speech before Congress last week, he pronounced them "un-American," adding: "Somebody said 'treasonous.' I mean, yeah, I guess, why not? Can we call that treason? Why not? I mean, they certainly didn't seem to love our country very much."

My favorite touch is the "somebody." With Trump, the darkest and most conspiratorial notions are never his doing or responsibility. He heard it somewhere. He read it someplace. And he's merely assenting in his open-minded and agreeable way. "I guess." "Why not?" Far be it from him to challenge this unspecified wisdom out there.

That meandering air masks a considered ploy: As a distraction and deflection, he routinely accuses his adversaries of the very wrongdoing that can more credibly be attributed to him. "Treason" is a word too grand to be thrown around casually, but it applies better to a president who minimizes and denigrates clear evidence that a foreign power meddled in an American election — and makes no real effort to prevent that from happening again — than it does to a bunch of lawmakers who decline to salute him. Their actions are largely theatrical. His

are substantively dangerous.

Never has a president been so gifted at projection, the psychological tic by which a person divines in others what's so deeply embedded in himself. Democrats, he said, were "selfish," putting their own feelings above the country's welfare. The man who signed tax legislation that benefits his business empire and spends roughly one of every three days at a Trump-branded property wouldn't know anything

about that.

He doesn't engage the substance of any opposition to him or investigation of him. He just invalidates the agents of it. That diverts the discussion from facts to name-calling, which is a game that nobody ever wins.

If journalists are documenting his falsehoods, they themselves must be fabulists. If judges rule against him, they must be biased. If federal law enforcement officials have suspicions about him or people who worked for him, they must be corrupt hacks.

If Democrats don't congratulate him for making America great again, they must be traitors.

Soon there is no one to trust but Trump, or no one to trust at all. That's the point. He's inoculating himself, and no price — not the reputations of individuals who have behaved honorably, not the viability of institutions that are crucial to the health of our democracy — is too steep to pay.

Treason: It's a word that he has used before, to characterize an FBI agent whose text messages made his distaste for Trump clear. Maybe the president is cheapening the term. When he degrades language, he diminishes its potency against him.

But if you accept his loose definition of treason, hasn't he committed it? I'm not referring to Russia; I'm referring to his effort to delegitimize President Barack Obama by insisting, with no evidence, that he was born outside the United States. That's infinitely more defiant and destabilizing than Nancy Pelosi's inert hands and anguished mien as Trump delivered his big speech. But he doesn't mention it anymore, so we, as good Americans, are supposed to forget about it, too.

I think it does the country a greater service to remember. I think it's more patriotic to withhold applause than to grant it too readily.

Do I wish for Trump to be an excellent president? Yes, and I'll clap heartily — with my hands and my feet — if that happens. Until then I decline, and if that's treason, I plead guilty.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times since 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995.



YOUR VIEWS

IPC over-forecasting their energy need

After reading the article from Mitch Colburn of Idaho Power touting their analysis that shows a need for the proposed B2H transmission line, may I please remind them of the following:

In a meeting in March of 2009, Mark Stokes, IPC's power supply planning manager, stated that IPC had a need for increased transmission capability. Then on February 5, 2015 (six years later), that same company stated at a PURPA meeting in Idaho that there was no need, that IPC could meet their peak demands through 2021 and beyond ... they won't need anything. It has been recently learned that IPC is consistently under-reporting their energy conservation and over-forecasting their energy need. From information gathered from the United States Energy Information Administration, the question was asked: "How fast is electric demand increasing in the United States?" Answer: "It isn't. Electric sales are flat. Total electricity sales fell in 2015 for the fifth time in the past eight years."

They (IPC) also speak of their regional partners for this proposed B2H project, i.e., Bonneville Power Administration and Pacific Corp. As a participant in the video/phone conference before the Oregon Public Utility Commission on Thursday, February 1, 2018, it came to light again at that conference that, so far, neither Pacific Corp nor Bonneville Power have agreed to construction. Idaho Power is asking to start preliminary construction before a site certificate is issued. No rules being followed here.

When the dams were built on the Snake River, one of the requirements was that fish ladders be constructed on these dams.

Again, no rules followed here as IPC chose to build these dams without the required fish ladders. How they got away with the blatant disregard for those requirements is still very questionable.

The proof is in the pudding. Everything sounds rosy and peachy-keen when presented by IPC, but, in light of the above, I question their integrity.

JoAnn Marlette
Baker City

Habitats are being destroyed

How much is enough? Regarding the newly-cleared area upstream from Riverfront Park and under the West Highland bridge: there was plenty of room, near the bridge, for entering the small area that used to belong to Oregon Fish & Wildlife, for parking, and for a new path to extend under the bridge west into the downstream park areas; even already in place, a put-in/take-out area for rafters. Who decided to slash and burn the entire area upstream to the boundary? Such a small area that could have been left wild!

Public parks need the wild areas too. Clearing and burning that small upstream area changed it forever. You destroyed a red fox den with kits due soon. You cleared out and burned a number of California quail shelters, burned and cleared grazing areas for herds of mule deer and white-tails. You destroyed nesting sites along the banks that dozens of mergansers and wood ducks used for longer than any of us can remember. I know, because the neighbors along Quick Road have watched all that activity and protected it from human encroachment for at least 80 years! Just how much is enough?

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